

# HOTHFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy

Date Reviewed: July 2013

Next Review: June 2016

Signed.....Governor

July 2013

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### **Rationale**

We recognise that regular school attendance is vital if pupils are to benefit fully from the opportunities which school offers them. We know the importance of continuity and progression in the learning process and that this can be disrupted by children not attending school regularly. We acknowledge the responsibility we have in the early years to foster in children and parents good habits of regular attendance and punctuality at school.

### **Aims**

- To promote and attain the highest possible levels of attendance, commensurate with pupils' health.
- To work with parents, encouraging them to recognise the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in the learning process.
- To record, monitor and report school attendance on a regular basis.

### **Responsibilities**

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that registers of pupil attendance are properly kept.

The Headteacher is responsible, on the Governing Body's behalf, for ensuring that the registration process is properly carried out.

Individual class teachers are responsible for completing class registers in accordance with legal requirements and school procedures.

The Headteacher will call upon the support of the Education Social Worker when deemed necessary, and will report irregular attendance and all pupil absence of two weeks or more.

### **Monitoring attendance**

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to be constantly aware of children who are absent, to communicate where possible with parents and to pass on concerns to the Headteacher. The Headteacher may decide on a course of action which involves the Education Welfare Service. The Headteacher will carry out random checks on the completion of registers and on pupil's attendance.

Children whose attendance drops below 90% or whose attendance is of concern should be referred to the Vulnerable Pupils Monitoring Group. The group may consider a contact by the Learning Mentor to discuss attendance and offer support if required, a letter of concern from the headteacher and/or referral to the EWO. The child's attendance will continue to be monitored by the group to note improvement.

Where attendance is not improved by these means we will make a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer who will issue a formal warning leading to prosecution if required.

**First Day of Absence:** In order to ensure the safety of all children we carry out detailed checks on the first day of absence Class teachers must send their registers to the office immediately after both morning and afternoon registration. If we have not been notified of absence we will telephone parents immediately to establish why an absence has occurred.

**Requests for a change in routine:** If anyone rings school to ask a child to leave school early, or to do anything which is not part of the child's usual routine (go to a friend's house; Grandma's etc) and we do not know the person as a regular carer, we will phone the child's parent to confirm the arrangement.

**Reporting Attendance:**

Each pupil's attendance record will form part of the curriculum report to parents, sent home at the end of the summer term. The number of possible and actual authorised and unauthorised absences will be detailed.

**Encouraging a positive attitude to attendance:**

Throughout the year we encourage parents to view attendance positively. This is achieved by: displays in school regarding attendance; letters making parents aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance; certificates or award stickers for good attendance presented annually etc.

Regular school attendance will be valued and acknowledged informally by class teachers.

**Retention of records**

**All registers will be kept for a period of three years after last being completed and will be stored in the Administrator's office.**

**Authorised / Unauthorised Absences**

The legal requirements are that school must indicate in the register whether absences are authorised or unauthorised. A pupil's absence can only be authorised by the Governing Body or the Headteacher on their behalf. The criteria which the school uses for authorising absence are in line with legal requirements and advice provided by the L.E.A. and are as follows: -

| <b>Reason for Absence</b>                                          | <b>Remarks</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Illness, medical and dental appointments                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is authorised absence. Pupils should be encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Sight of an appointment card is advisable if a pupil is an irregular attender.</li> <li>• If a pupil is present for registration but has a medical appointment later, or returns home because of illness, no absence need be recorded for that session.</li> <li>• Schools should keep a record of pupils leaving or returning to site in case of an emergency.</li> <li>• If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools and EWOs can consult the School Health Service, or the pupil's GP.</li> <li>• A pupil receiving medical treatment on site should be marked 'present'.</li> </ul> |
| Days of religious observance                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals.</li> <li>• Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Reason for Absence</b>                                          | <b>Remarks</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Dual Registration involving Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) or special | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The law allows for dual registration of pupils at both a PRU or special school and another local school. This helps, for example, to ease a phased return to mainstream education.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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| schools                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a pupil is dually registered at institution X and Y, institution X marks the pupil authorised absent while they are attending institution Y and vice-versa. Both institutions share responsibility for the child.</li> <li>• Failure to attend either institution at the proper time without good reason is unauthorised absence.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Family holidays during term time                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents should not normally take pupils on holidays in term.</li> <li>• Following the statutory regulations from September 2013, the headteacher will not authorise leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents will need to write to the headteacher explaining these exceptional circumstances and request leave of absence. Cost and convenience of holiday do not constitute exceptional circumstances.</li> <li>• Leave of absence requests should be completed using the school pro-forma by the child's parent/s at least 10 days before the proposed absence.</li> <li>• If the headteacher does not agree absence and the pupil goes on holiday, absence is unauthorised.</li> <li>• Parents could be liable to a Fixed Penalty Charge if their child's absence is unauthorised.</li> <li>• If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised.</li> <li>• Schools may delete from roll a pupil who fails to return within 10 school days of the agreed return date unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness.</li> </ul> |
| Exclusion                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A pupil excluded for a fixed period remains on roll and the absence should be treated as authorised as it results from a decision taken by the school. Similarly, the absence of a permanently excluded pupil is treated as authorised while any review or appeal is in progress.</li> <li>• If a permanent exclusion is confirmed, the pupil's name should be removed from the school roll on the school day either: after the appeal committee's confirmation of permanent exclusion; or on expiry of the time allowed for appeals to be made; or, if before that, the pupil takes up a place elsewhere. Meanwhile absence should be recorded as authorised.</li> <li>• Teachers are responsible for setting work for an excluded pupil who remains on the school roll.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Traveller child when the family is travelling                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To help ensure continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. This means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling.</li> <li>• While the Traveller is away, the base school holds the place open and records absence as authorised.</li> <li>• Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Family bereavements, or child caring for a sick or disabled family member (young carers). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools should respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals or associated events and have discretion to authorise such absences.</li> <li>• Similarly, schools may authorise limited duration absence for young carers until other arrangements can be made (see also Section 3 of the Circular).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Special occasions                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools should consider each request individually. Only exceptional occasions warrant leave of absence. For example, attending the wedding of</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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|                     | <p>a family member would be acceptable, but a day's absence for a birthday or a shopping trip in school hours would not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools should consider: the nature of the event; its frequency (is it a one-off, or likely to become a regular occurrence?); whether the parent gave advance notice; the pupil's overall attendance pattern.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                     |
| Public performances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Local Authority must licence a pupil to take part in a public performance.</li> <li>• Agreed participation should be treated as authorised absence.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Lateness            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival which could provide grounds for prosecution.</li> <li>• Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open. Thirty minutes from the beginning of registration would be reasonable, but schools can set shorter periods.</li> <li>• In circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties, schools may keep the register open for a longer period.</li> </ul> |

**Guidance for staff on registration**

1. Children should be in the playground by 8.50 a.m. in order to come in promptly ready for an 8.55 a.m. start.
2. All children who are present in the registration period from 8.55am to 9.00 am are marked present
3. All children arriving after the register has been sent to the office or after 9.10 a.m. must sign the late book in the office
4. Children arriving between 9.00am and 9.10am are marked late ('L')
5. Children arriving between 9.10 and 9.30 and marked late with the number of minutes late recorded.
6. Children arriving after 9.30 are marked with a U - ('Late after register has closed')
7. All these late children will receive a mark in both the absent and present columns of the register.
8. On Friday afternoons the school clerk will adjust the registers on the advice of the Head to show..... present late for children arriving 9.10 to 9.30 a.m.  
or..... late absent for children arriving after 9.30 for no good reason  
or..... M for children late for medical reasons.
9. Consequently, all children physically in school at any one time will have some sort of mark in the register in case of fire or other emergency.
10. All registers must be sent to the office for verification of absence immediately after both morning and afternoon registration.
11. If a child goes home early with an adult, the adult must sign the child out at the school office giving the reason.